



Holocaust Remembrance Event

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thursday, April 15, 2010

In 1943, they trained in the deserts of Arizona and California for a mission none expected – the liberation of Nazi death camps in Germany.

Three U.S. Army units – the 8th – the 80th – and the 104th Infantry Division -- all trained in Yuma – were the first to reach the gates of several concentration camps, they were the first to see the horror on the dark side of the barbed wire.

Men like Jack Nemerov -- one of those we honor today -- who survived landing at Omaha Beach in France to liberate those held in Dachau near Munich – the first camp established by the Nazis.

Marion Weinzweig -- a survivor whom we also honor here today -- was one of only two Jewish children who survived from her Polish town.

Through the darkness and tragedy of those times, there came the light of goodness and salvation.

There came the heroes who wore the U.S. uniform.

There came the liberators.

There came our soldiers who opened the gates, cut the wires, and tended to the sick and dying.

During the final days of World War Two in Europe, men who had trained here in Arizona exposed the Nazi's final solution of evil and their death camps located throughout Europe.

In those final days, our soldiers were transformed from warriors -- to aid-workers, putting away their guns and arming themselves with compassion and, yes, with bravery ... the bravery to see what unrestrained hate can do.

The stories of those liberators are the focus of this exhibit, *When Humanity Fails*.

It is a joint effort between the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the Afikim (ah-fi-KIM) Foundation.

As you look at this exhibit today, you will see the Holocaust as witnessed by American soldiers who brought an end to the death camps.

This exhibit has been displayed across the nation -- in places such as Fort Bragg and the United States Military Academy at West Point.

And, it has been housed at the Yuma Proving Ground – the only active duty Army installation that remains of the former California-Arizona training area.

I am proud to be able to bring this exhibit to Arizona's Capitol.

***When Humanity Fails* brings us a chilling message. It says, “this is what hatred -- and war -- and anti-Semitism look like.”**

But, it also brings us a message of courage and the spirit of people who refused to submit – who could not be broken.

This exhibit teaches us about the fragile nature of humanity -- about our responsibilities toward each other, as people, as nations.

Through such exhibits -- and through holocaust education and remembrance -- we understand why the atrocities must never be forgotten – and why the liberators must always be celebrated.

By embracing its lessons, we build a stronger foundation for a future that is both peaceful and free – for Arizona – for the United States – and for the world.

It was Saturday, July 15, 1944.

In her diary a German teen-ager wrote,

(QUOTE) “In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death.

“I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too -- I can feel the sufferings of millions -- and yet -- if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will ALL COME RIGHT -- that this cruelty, too, will end -- and that peace and tranquility will return again.”

(END QUOTE)

**And so peace and tranquility HAVE returned,
Anne Frank.**

... And, so, they have.